

Curbside Recycling



Plastics Recycling at Curbside

The plastic materials collected through West Linn's curbside recycling program ? combined with collection programs from other parts of Oregon, central Washington, and Boise, Idaho ? add up to 240 tons of plastics that are processed and sold to market each month by K.B. Recycling in Clackamas, the local materials recovery facility (MRF). Yet there are many types of plastic and not all of them are recyclable at curbside. Why? Since manufacturers use only certain types of plastic resins for making new products, not all plastics at present are marketable for use as raw materials.

The marketability of resources for remaking them into new products depends on how consistent and debris-free they are. Bottle lids are no-no's in West Linn because they fall through the sifting screens at the MRF and contaminate the separated loads of paper ready to be baled and sold to market. Plastic bags are not collected at curbside in West Linn because they get caught up in screens and sorting wheels of the MRF, forcing the facility to shut down its operations every six hours just to remove the tangles of plastic bags.

What Plastics are Recyclable in West Linn?

There are only four types of plastics that can be collected in your gray cart:

1. **Plastic bottles, jugs, and jars** (with narrow threaded necks for screw-on lids). Be sure to rinse them out. Place lids in garbage.
2. **Plastic tubs** marked as **HDPE** or **PP** on the bottom with at least 6-ounce capacity. Be sure to rinse them out. Place lids in garbage. Recycled HDPE (high density polyethylene) materials can be made into items such as laundry detergent bottles, oil bottles, pens, recycling containers, floor tiles, drainage pipes, lumber, benches, doghouses, picnic tables, or fencing. Recycled PP (polypropylene) materials can be made into products such as signal lights, battery cables, brooms, brushes, auto battery cases, ice scrapers, landscape borders, bicycle racks, rakes, bins, pallets, or trays.
3. **Plastic nursery pots**, the rigid ones only, that have a diameter of at least 4 inches. Be sure to rinse them first.
4. **Plastic buckets**, 5 gallons or smaller. Be sure to rinse them out first. Handles are okay.

Other Plastics

While plastic bags, bottle lids other types of plastic items cannot be placed in your gray recycling cart, they can be brought to other collection centers nearby. Metro has listings of local area resources for recycling plastic materials such as CDs, plastic bags, Styrofoam™ blocks, polystyrene packing peanuts and more. Visit the website at

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Published on City of West Linn Oregon Official Website (<http://westlinnoregon.gov>)

www.oregonmetro.gov/findrecycler or call Metro Recycling Information at (503) 234-3000. Perhaps some plastic items not picked up in the curbside program can be gathered collectively by your neighbors, co-workers, youth group or other types of organizations you're involved in. That way a periodic drop-off trip to the local recycler can become a more sustainable practice for everyone.

Other Resources

For ideas on reuse of nursery pots see

<http://planetgreen.discovery.com/home-garden/reuse-plastic-nursery-pots.html>. For making artful pots see <http://faq.gardenweb.com/faq/lists/junk/2003043245028444.html>.

For information on new products made from recycled plastics 1 – 7, visit

<http://www.thedailygreen.com/green-homes/latest/recycling-symbols-plastics-460321>

Metro offers numerous small guides on with tips to help you recycle, compost, garden with fewer chemicals, clean with nontoxic products, safely dispose of hazardous chemicals and take other steps to reduce waste. Visit www.oregonmetro.gov/recycling to order any of these free publications.

Source URL (retrieved on 2012-11-19 09:42): <http://westlinnoregon.gov/sustainability/curbside-recycling>